

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 01623 031027Z

11

ACTION SS-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 EUR-08 DODE-00 PRS-01 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5042

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 1623

LIMDIS

FOR UNDERSEC SISCO FROM AMBASSADOR IRVING

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: (UNDERSEC SISCO - CNO ADMIRAL HOLLOWAY)

SUBJECT: SISCO/HOLLOWAY VISIT: PRESS INTERVIEW

1. MANAGING EDITOR MATTHIAS JOHANNESSEN AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS EDITOR STYRMIR GUNNARSSON OF MORGUNBLADID HAVE REQUESTED AN EXCLUSIVE ON-THE-RECORD INTERVIEW WITH YOU AND ADMIRAL HOLLOWAY. THESE GENTLEMEN ARE RESPONSIBLE, INTELLIGENT PRO-U.S., PRO-IDF, PRO-NATO NEWSMEN WHO HAVE BEEN OF INESTIMABLE ASSISTANCE TO THIS EMBASSY, THE BASE, AND TO U.S. FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES ON ALL OCCASIONS. I PARTICULARLY HAVE HAD A VERY CLOSE AND BENEFICIAL PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM. THEY HAVE FOUGHT HARD FOR IDF RETENTION THESE PAST TWO YEARS AND THEIR ATTITUDE AND ARTICLES MUST BE GIVEN SOME OF THE CREDIT FOR WINNING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR IDF RETENTION. PRIOR AND DURING THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL ELECTIONS GUNNARSSON WAS FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR TO THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY.

2. MORGUNBLADID, WHICH IS THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY NEWSPAPER, IS THE LARGEST DAILY IN ICELAND, WITH A CIRCULATION OF 42,000 IN A COUNTRY POPULATION OF 213,000. THIS MAKES IT PROBABLY THE PAPER WITH THE LARGEST DAILY PER CAPITA CIRCULATION IN THE WORLD. ITS CIRCULATION IS GREATER THAN ALL THE OTHER 4 DAILY NEWSPAPERS COMBINED. IT REACHES EVERY HOME IN THE COUNTRY. THE CHAIRMAN
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OF THE BOARD OF MORGUNBLADID IS PRIME MINISTER GEIR HALLGRIMSSON.

THE BEST MEANS OF GETTING A MESSAGE ACROSS TO THE ICELANDIC PUBLIC IS THROUGH THIS NEWSPAPER. ALTHOUGH YOU WILL BE HOLDING A PRESS CONFERENCE WITH ALL THE MEDIA ALTOGETHER, INCLUDING A REPRESENTATIVE OF MORGUNBLADID, YOU WILL RECEIVE BETTER, FULLER AND MORE OBJECTIVE COVERAGE IF FOLLOWED UP BY AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH JOHANNESSEN AND GUNNARSSON.

3. THE INTERVIEW CAN BE LIMITED TO 20-30 MINUTES AND CAN BE HELD AT MY RESIDENCE. WE AS YET DO NOT KNOW YOUR SCHEDULED DEPARTURE ON WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 11, BUT I WOULD SUGGEST TIME BE MADE FOR THE INTERVIEWS ON WEDNESDAY MORNING. IT CAN BE AS EARLY IN THE DAY AS MEETS YOUR CONVENIENCE.

4. I STRONGLY URGE YOUR CONCURRENCE.
IRVING

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